



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk (860)441-6640
Town Manager
(860)441-6630

Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Kathryn M. Brown-Tracy, Bruce S. Flax, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, and Paulann H. Sheets

Tuesday, May 19, 2009

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Mayor Harry Watson.

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Flax, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Schmidt and Councilor Sheets

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Mayor Watson.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

2009-0079 Proclamation Recognizing National Arbor Day

Read

The proclamation was read by Councilor Brown-Tracy.

2009-0107 Proclamation Honoring Lenny T. Winkler

Read

The proclamation was read by Councilor Schmidt.

2009-0108 Proclamation Honoring Catherine W. Cook

Read

The proclamation was read by Mayor Watson.

2009-0113 Proclamation - Outstanding Groton Educator Hall of Fame Award

Read

The proclamation was read by Councilor Sheets.

2009-0121 Proclamation Recognizing Groton Senior Center Topping Out Day

Read

The proclamation was read by Councilor Kolnaski.

2009-0127 Proclamation Recognizing Groton Kids' Safety Day

Read

The proclamation was read by Councilor Monteiro.

Expression of Gratitude to the Emergency Management Department

Councilor Kolnaski stated that at a recent Ledge Light Health District meeting concerning the flu, it was mentioned that the Town of Groton is very fortunate to have its Emergency Management Department. They are to be commended, as they were well-informed regarding the issue and responded promptly.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

None.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

None.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2009-0128 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meetings of April 21, 2009 and April 28, 2009 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2009-0115 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

Voodoo Grill - \$75.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
John Hinkle - \$100.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
George Marshall - \$100.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Various Donations - \$45.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Bambi Poppicki - \$5.00 - Animal Shelter Miscellaneous
Phillip Poteat - \$5.00 - Animal Shelter Miscellaneous
Jerry Guinn - \$13.00 - Animal Shelter Miscellaneous
James Lancaster - \$25.00 - Animal Shelter Miscellaneous
Susan McMillin - \$250.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2008-0092 Creation of a Town Garden

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0294 Home Connecticut Program

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2009-0076 Update of the Debt Policy and Management/Fiscal Practices

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2009-0110 2010 Census

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2009-0120 FYE 2009 Suspense List

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried unanimously

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Councilor Monteiro attended a reception honoring former State Representative Lenny T. Winkler

and former State Senator Catherine W. Cook.

Councilor Kolnaski attended the Fitch Senior High School basket raffle fund-raiser, the Groton Educator Hall of Fame Ceremony, an intergenerational program between seniors and students of Claude Chester discussing various aspects of conservation and the environment, a Ledge Light Health District meeting, and the Phase II School Design Committee meeting. She also noted that there will be a joint Town Council/Board of Education/RTM Liaison Committee meeting on May 20, 2009.

Councilor Sheets attended a joint Energy & Technology Committee/Appropriations Committee Public Hearing in Hartford and an International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Conference. She received a phone call concerning the senior citizen tax abatement program.

Councilor Schmidt and Mayor Watson received an email from the co-chair of the Relay for Life of New London County Shoreline in reference to an increase in fees. The Mayor passed the email to Board of Education member Bob Peruzzotti. Councilor Schmidt attended the Equinox Diner open house.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

The RTM budget meetings are proceeding, with the last to occur on May 20, 2009. Office Assistant Lori Watrous noted that a referral has been made by the RTM to the Town Council requesting a Task Force be established regarding "Shared Services with Stonington".

c. Clerk of the Council

Office Assistant Lori Watrous relayed that there was a problem with the legal ads concerning the Public Hearing for the Central Avenue lease, and requested that the Council suspend the rules to adopt a new resolution to set a new hearing date for June 2, 2009. She also noted that due to a resignation on the Water Pollution Control Authority, it will be difficult to obtain a quorum as there are currently only three members. Anyone interested should contact the Town Clerk's office.

d. Town Manager

The Town Manager stated that the RTM will conclude its budget meetings on May 20, 2009. Resolutions for the Committee of the Whole will be generated at the conclusion of those meetings. He noted that legislature has just passed legislation to allow communities that have enacted a revaluation phase-in to suspend that phase-in. A staff review and analysis of issues to be aware of regarding this legislature will be on the next agenda for the Committee of the Whole. The Town Manager announced that the Annual Student Leaders' Breakfast will be on May 29, 2009.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Brown-Tracy

No meeting, no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Bond

No meeting, no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski

No meeting, no report.

d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Sheets

No meeting, no report.

e. Finance - Chairman Schmidt

No meeting, no report.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman O'Beirne

No meeting, no report.

g. Public Safety

No meeting, no report.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Monteiro

No meeting, no report.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson

The Committee of the Whole discussed the items on tonight's agenda.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilor Sheets requested an update on the prescription assistance program through the National League of Cities. The Town Manager stated that he will get the specifics on implementation the program.

X. NEW BUSINESS**2009-0076 Update of the Debt Policy and Management/Fiscal Practices****RESOLUTION APPROVING THE TOWN OF GROTON STATEMENT OF DEBT POLICY AND MANAGEMENT/FISCAL PRACTICES**

WHEREAS, in 1993 the Town Council adopted a statement of policy concerning criteria that should be met before Town debt would be issued, and

WHEREAS, the Town's experience in issuing new debt and working with bond rating agencies in recent years has shown areas in which a new statement of debt and bonding policy, including specific criteria for fund balances, should be completed; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the Town of Groton Debt Policy and Management/Fiscal Practices dated May 2009.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2009-0110 2010 Census**RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE FOR THE 2010 NATIONAL CENSUS**

WHEREAS, the decennial Census of the United States will next occur in calendar year 2010, and

WHEREAS, the official population count that is attributed to a municipality affects a town's category or classification under state and federal laws and regulations, and affects a town's ability to qualify for numerous grants, subsidies, and other benefits, and

WHEREAS, officials of the Town of Groton have had reason to believe that there was significant "undercounting" by the U.S. Census Bureau of the Town of Groton's population in 2000, and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census Bureau recommends that municipalities consider establishing a Complete Count Committee for planning and carrying out a campaign of local targeted efforts that will address the special characteristics of the community, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager should establish a Town of Groton Complete Count Committee, such committee to include Town and City officials, Board of Education, United States Navy base, and other civic and neighborhood organizations as may seem appropriate.

A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Brown-Tracy, that this matter

be Adopted.

Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent stressed the importance of the census, stating that the amount of funding from the stimulus act for education is based on income levels and that one or two families can make a difference.

The motion carried unanimously

2009-0120

FYE 2009 Suspense List

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE FISCAL YEAR 2009 SUSPENSE LIST

WHEREAS, State law requires that once a year a list shall be compiled of taxes that should be suspended, and

WHEREAS, the accounts which have been determined as uncollectible have been contacted at least nine times with no response, and

WHEREAS, placing uncollected items on the Suspense List helps avoid waste of money and staff time, and

WHEREAS, taxpayers remain liable for all amounts that are placed on the Suspense List, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the following amounts be added to the Suspense List as reported to the Town Council:

Town: \$644,309.75

Sewer District: \$2,120.16

Mumford Cove: \$3.92

Total: \$646,433.83

A motion was made by Councilor Brown-Tracy, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

Suspension of the Rules

A motion to suspend the rules to set the date for a Public Hearing on the proposed lease on the property for TVCCA was made by Mayor Watson, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski and so voted unanimously.

2009-0134

Public Hearing on TVCCA Lease

RESOLUTION SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING ON A PROPOSED LEASE OF TOWN PROPERTY TO TVCCA

WHEREAS, the public hearing originally scheduled for May 19, 2009 was not properly noticed, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Groton Town Council will hold a public hearing on a proposed lease of Town-owned premises at 40 Central Avenue to the Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA) on Tuesday, June 2, 2009, at 7:30 p.m., at Town Hall Annex, Community Room #1.

A motion was made by Mayor Watson, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

After a request for clarification on the equalized grand lists, the Town Manager stated that they are designed to enable ranking municipalities with respect to mill rates and revaluation dates.

The Town Manager was asked if there is a mechanism to restore \$10,000 to the Mystic & Noank Library budget if Stonington is willing to provide the same amount of funding as Groton. He stated that a resolution could be generated for a supplemental appropriation at a later date.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:13 p.m. was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Monteiro and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant